

Week Ending Friday, July 13, 2001

**The President's Radio Address**

*July 7, 2001*

Good morning. My second working day as President, I sent to Congress the boldest plan to improve our public schools in a generation, a plan to raise educational standards for every child and to require new accountability from every school. This reform gives our public schools greater resources and insists on proven results in return, not just for some of our children but for all of them.

The plan has now passed both Houses of Congress with strong margins and broad bipartisan support. We stand on the verge of dramatic improvements for America's public schools. We're increasing funding for public schools and insisting on results. We are maximizing local control to give Governors, school boards, and local people more say in their schools. And we are giving parents unprecedented new choices to help their children get a quality education.

Yet, all of this will happen only when Congress joins with me to take the final, crucial step of resolving differences between the House and the Senate versions and sending an education reform bill to my desk.

Across America, Governors are waiting to work with their legislatures to implement reform. Local school boards are eager to put the new flexibility my plan offers into action. We are ready to provide teachers with the best research on the science of reading this very fall. We need to act quickly, because States and schools must make decisions on how to use their new flexibility and live up to their new responsibility.

We have come so far; we're almost there. And we must finish the job. Completing the work of education reform is a final exam for Congress before they go home in August for summer vacation and before America's children go back to school.

The differences between the education reform bills that passed with large majorities

in both House and Senate are small. Both bills call for strong accountability. The Senate bill gives States more flexibility. The House bill is more fiscally responsible and focuses Federal dollars where they will do the most good.

With prompt action this month, our public schools can begin to implement the first of the education reforms this fall, with guidance to help teachers use the latest research to teach all our children to read.

This is summer vacation for our children, and it can be a season of accomplishment for our Nation's leaders. I urge the Congress to act swiftly on my education reform plan.

Thank you for listening.

NOTE: The address was recorded at 11:40 a.m. on July 5 in the Cabinet Room at the White House for broadcast at 10:06 a.m. on July 7. The transcript was made available by the Office of the Press Secretary on July 6 but was embargoed for release until the broadcast. The Office of the Press Secretary also released a Spanish language transcript of this address.

**Remarks at a Ceremony Honoring America's Promise**

*July 9, 2001*

Thank you all very much. Marc. There is no more important goal for America than to make sure every person realizes the promise of our great land, and I want to thank the good folks of America's Promise for working tirelessly to make sure that goal reaches throughout all our country. My administration stands side by side with you.

And here in Washington, we can help. It's important for the Congress to pass the education reform package to make sure no child gets left behind. It's important for Congress to pass a good and meaningful Patients' Bill of Rights to make sure all in America have got good access to health care. And it's important for America for Congress to pass my

faith-based initiative so that Government can stand side by side with the soldiers in the armies of compassion to make sure America's promise is rich and real for every citizen.

I'm honored that the first chairman of America's Promise agreed to be our Nation's Secretary of State. He's doing a fantastic job for our country. Welcome, Mr. Secretary. Like me, he married well. *[Laughter]* Thank you for being here, Alma.

I want to thank my friend Marc Racicot for being the chairman of the board. I want to thank Peter Gallagher. I welcome my friend the Governor of Maine, Angus King, for being here. I want to thank Ted Stevens and Connie Morella, as well, for being here—Members of the United States Congress. I want to thank the First Lady of Michigan, Michelle Engler, for joining us, as well. It is my honor to welcome to the Rose Garden Jackie Joyner-Kersey, as well as Bob. Thank you all, and thank you for being such a great supporter for America's Promise.

I also want to thank the members of the board of directors, as well as the members of the Youth Leadership Team, 15 of our best in America who are here today. Please stand. *[Applause]*

Just as I was receiving the organization's annual report, I also had an opportunity to say hello to the 15. And our country is in great hands when you look in the eyes of these 15 fantastic leaders. The record has been impressive, and the commitment has been deep. And I want to thank you, Marc, for continuing to challenge corporate America and individuals with the simple and urgent message: There's a need in every community, and a responsible society meets those needs.

Today we're joined by several men and women from around the country who represent the promise of America's Promise:

Mary Mahoney, the president and chief executive officer of Howard Johnson's. Where's Mary? Hi, Mary. Thank you for coming. She's been a mentor, and she's inspired employees at more than 500 hotels to serve as mentors. I want to thank you very much for your dedication.

Leon Assael, the dean of College of Dentistry at the University of Kentucky, is here. Mr. Dean, where are you? Thank you for

coming, Dean. They staffed a mobile dental van and asked volunteer faculty and students to serve more than 12,500 disadvantaged students in Appalachia. Thank you for your service to the country.

Reverend Clifford Barnett of Virginia's Brighton Rock AME Church. Thank you for coming, Reverend. He set up a safe haven for children to come to a place of worship, not only to find hot meals but to learn how to serve one another.

Charlie Trotter of Trotter's Restaurant of Chicago. Hello, Charlie. The man not only serves good food, but every Groundhog Day he opens his kitchen to teach area youth and has sponsored some of his neighborhood youth through scholarship programs. I want to thank you all for coming.

This is an example of the greatness of our country, where people ask the question, "What can I do to help?"—and then not wait for some Government activity to take place but do it anyway in spite of Government. I want to thank you all for serving as fantastic examples, just like I want to thank Aisha Shaheen. Where is she? Aisha—there she is. Thank you so much for coming. She understands that service is a part of a successful life. Catch this: She teaches honors in advanced placement English, biology, and calculus to inner-city youngsters in the south central neighborhood of Los Angeles.

We know what children need to succeed. They need mentors and role models like Aisha. They need to be healthy and educated and challenged to serve and challenged to love a neighbor just like they'd like to be loved themselves. And that's what America's Promise does.

In many neighborhoods, what a child needs is a caring adult. Yesterday, flying down from Maine, Angus King, the Governor of that State, told me about a program that he's starting to implement, where this summer they're going to recruit 30,000 mentors in the State of Maine, all aimed to surround the children of Maine with love, all aimed at understanding there's nothing more powerful than an individual that says to a child in need, "Somebody cares for you. Somebody loves you." So Angus, I want to thank you for setting the example.

My dream for America is for there to be mentors all over the country, in every neighborhood, in every community, where adults are able to say to a child, "The America's Promise belongs to you, just as much as it does to anybody else."

The effort requires a broad-scaled strategy. That's why I was pleased to see that America's Promise has drawn 500 national partners and more than 550 State and local partners. And the effort really has just begun.

So I want to thank America's Promise. I want to thank you for your love and compassion. And I want to thank the thousands all across our land who are working hard to make America a fabulous country for all.

Now, there are some things that Congress can do, as well. First, this Congress needs to get a education reform bill on my desk before the summer recess. We had a bill pass out of the House by a broad margin, a bill pass out of the Senate by a broad margin. There is no need for further delay. It is time to get a good reform bill.

This is a bill that says every child matters. We believe in setting high expectations for all children in America. We believe every child can learn. But we also understand that educational excellence is found at local levels. We pass unprecedented amount of power out of Washington to local jurisdictions, and in return for Federal dollars, which we increase, we expect results. We expect there to be a measurement so we can herald success and address failure before it's too late.

Secondly, the Congress must act on a Patients' Bill of Rights, a good Patients' Bill of Rights, one that recognizes patients are important, not lawyers, a Patients' Bill of Rights that encourages quality health care without encouraging frivolous and junk lawsuits that will threaten the very existence of an important health care policy in America. And so I urge—I urge Congress to bring a reasonable bill to my desk. We've made great progress. There's broad agreement.

For example, a heart patient should be able to see a cardiologist he needs without going through a gatekeeper, or a woman should be able to see her gynecologist without asking permission, or a parent should always be able to choose their child's pediatri-

cian. And anyone denied health care by an HMO ought to have the right to an immediate appeal, with the outcome determined by doctors, not HMO bureaucrats or trial lawyers.

We've got the makings for a good bill, and Congress ought to act and bring me a bill so I can sign it before the August recess.

And finally, there is no more important initiative than the faith-based program that I've submitted to the United States Congress. It's important because Government can't make people love one another. But what Government can do is stand side by side with those who do love and those who are compassionate. I can't think of anything more important for our Government to recognize the power of community and faith-based groups in our society. If the goal is to make sure no one is left behind, let us stand side by side with the soldiers in the armies of compassion who have taken on that call, themselves.

So I urge Congress to not get stuck in the process but to think about the results and to pass meaningful legislation that will allow and encourage and foster faith-based groups all across America to help people in need. I absolutely know that the great strength of the country lies in the hearts and souls of our citizens. And Congress must recognize that by enabling such faith-based programs to flourish all across the country.

So there are things we can do here in Washington to help. But there's nothing more important than our citizens. And America's Promise does a fabulous job of cultivating and gathering and nurturing the compassion of America. It's an honor to be the President of a country with so many loving people.

I understand that societies change one heart, one soul at a time, that here in Washington we tend to think all we've got to do is pass a law and everything will be fine. But that's not how it works. Cultures and hope change as a result of our compassion in America seizing the moment. And that's what America's Promise is about.

So Marc, thank you very much for bringing the report. I'm honored to receive it. I encourage people all across our country to find

a way to help, to become involved with making sure America's Promise is, in fact,—reaches it's hope all throughout our society. For those of you who are looking for a way to help our country, call America's Promise; say you want to help. And I can assure you we'll sign you up.

It's now my honor to sign a resolution, like other Presidents have done.

God bless you all, and God bless America.

NOTE: The President spoke at 10:25 a.m. in the Rose Garden at the White House. In his remarks, he referred to former Gov. Marc Racicot of Montana, chairman of the board, Peter A. Gallagher, president and chief executive officer, Michelle Engler, board member, and Jackie Joyner-Kersey, spokesperson, America's Promise; Alma Powell, wife of Secretary of State Colin L. Powell; and Ms. Joyner-Kersey's husband, Bobby Kersey. Following his remarks, the President signed the Declaration to Fulfill the Promise of America.

### Remarks at Inova Fair Oaks Hospital and an Exchange With Reporters in Fairfax, Virginia

July 9, 2001

#### *Patients' Bill of Rights*

**The President.** Thank you all for coming. Knox, thank you very much for setting up the meeting with Knox and hospital officials, nurses, former patients. We had a great discussion about the need for our Nation to pass legislation with America's patients in mind, that the whole core of a good bill recognizes that patients ought to have direct access to specialists, such as Dr. Berry, an ob-gyn—cancer specialists, that patients ought to have the capacity to take complaints to an independent review organization staffed by doctors and medical professionals.

We're making good progress. There is a lot of agreement on a bill that has—bills moving their way through the House of Representatives right now.

But I want a bill to sign that does not run the cost of premiums up or health care up as a result of excessive lawsuits. I want a bill that honors patients, not trial lawyers, a bill that makes it easier for docs to do their job, as opposed to a bill that encourage excessive litigation.

I want to, again, thank you for the chance to visit.

Dr. Berry, you might want to say a few things.

[At this point, Dr. David B. Berry made brief remarks.]

**The President.** Okay, thank you all.

**Q.** Mr. President, any decisions on stem cell—

**Q.** What did you hear from the patients—

**Q.** What did the patients—

**The President.** The patients just want to make sure they've got access to specialists, and they, too, like the idea of having an independent review organization where they can take their complaints, where they can solve problems before it ends up in a court of law.

There are some people up there on the Hill that are interested in fostering excessive litigation, which is not good for patients. I think Americans understand that.

NOTE: The President spoke at 2:18 p.m. in the boardroom following discussions in the hospital. In his remarks, he referred to J. Knox Singleton, chief executive officer, Inova Health System. A tape was not available for verification of the content of these remarks.

### Videotape Remarks to the NAACP Convention

July 9, 2001

Thank you very much. I'm honored to be able to send my greetings to you for the 92d annual convention of the NAACP.

Last year I joined you in person at your convention in Baltimore. I said that there is no denying the truth that racism, despite all our progress, still exists, and that there's no escaping the reality that the party of Lincoln has not always carried the mantle of Lincoln. I said that recognizing and confronting our history is important but transcending our history is essential.

A year has passed since I gave that speech, and nearly 6 months have passed since I became the President. We must continue our work to ensure that my party keeps faith with the memory of Abraham Lincoln and Frederick Douglass.